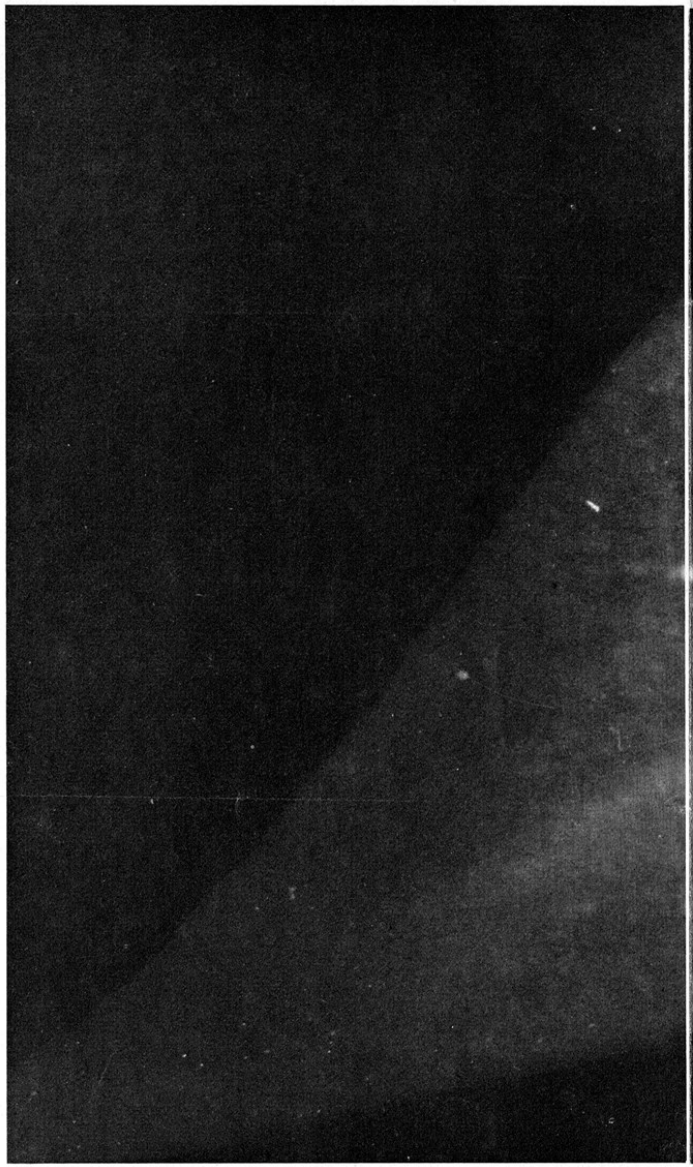
LOCH NESS 1972—The 'Rines/Edgerton Picture'

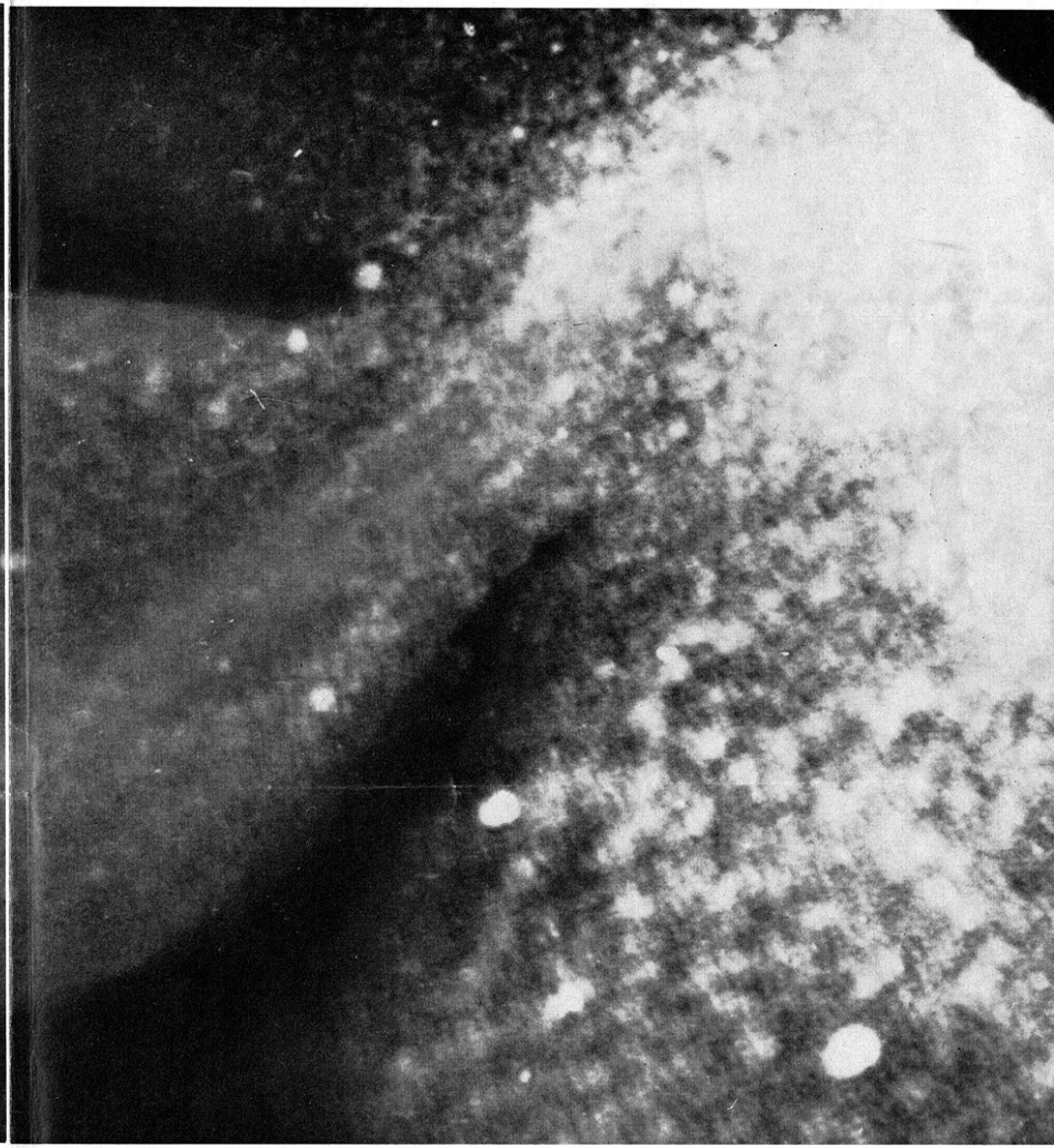
by Tim Dinsdale

In the March 1970 issue of* The Photographic Journal, *Tim Dinsdale presented a case for serious Monsterhunting, under the title "The Potential of Photography at Loch Ness". Since then he has run two summer-long photo' expeditions for the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau as Surface-photography Director; and in 1972 spent three months on private operations aboard* Hunter, *a specially adapted photographic boat. Altogether he has been involved at Loch Ness with fieldwork since 1960 and is thus in a position to bring information up to date . . . which may not, however, entirely convince those who objected to the publication of the "Oregon Photograph" in our January issue of this year. All we can say to any who feel that the Loch Ness Monster or Unidentified Flying Objects are "crank" issues not worthy of serious consideration by a learned society is to remind them that the RPS exists to promote all aspects of photography, which means that, since photography, as a visual medium, is so close to life itself, it may, on occasion, lead us into strange fields of human endeavour or even signpost the horizons of what could be tomorrow's science.

In years past, the cry at Loch Ness would be—"Where is your scientific evidence?" Today, no one who is aware of the facts concerning the phenomenon of the "Monster", and the results obtained from recent probings, would bother to ask the question. He would know that, since 1966, reports have been published which are scientifically based, analysing the results of photographic work above and below the surface and the sonar contacts obtained—indicating large midwater moving objects—the echoes from which are not apparently spurious or from any known species of fish.

To establish credibility, and to gain a sense of perspective, it is useful to list these more important results starting with the RAF's Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre Report on the film I shot of the Monster at Loch Ness, in 1960. This report, which was published as an HMSO document in 1966, accepts the film as genuine and as showing an object which moved at some 10 mph—a cross section





Right: The extraordinary photograph obtained at Loch Ness from a camera suspended at a depth of 50 feet

through which would be at least 6 feet wide and 5 feet deep. As it submerged during the course of the film and travelled half a mile without a propeller wash, it was clearly animate.

In 1967, Richard Raynor obtained a short sequence of 35mm black and white film through one of the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau's ultra long-range cine cameras. It showed a big V wash moving on calm water, which ceased when *Scott 2*, a local passenger boat, appeared in frame, proving the locality beyond a doubt. The RAF analysis found a 7 foot object at the apex of the wash, just breaking surface.

In 1968, Professor D. Gordon Tucker and Hugh Braithwaite of the University of Birmingham tried out a new type of digital sonar at Loch Ness over a period of two weeks. Filmed recordings of the display showed echoes from large moving objects, the behaviour of which ruled out fish.

In 1969, Robert E. Love, Jr., sponsored by Field Enterprise of Chicago in conjunction with the Loch Ness Investigation (LNI) obtained more contacts, using a Honeywell sonar mounted at the bows of a patrolling boat. Both these sets of photographed results were published by the LNI in its 1968 and 1969 Annual Reports.

In 1970, a small team of sonar experts from the Academy of Applied Science, Belmont, Mass., including its president, Dr Robert H. Rines, and the designer of a highly definitive sidescan sonar, Dr Martin Klein, obtained more clear contacts in both the static and mobile sonar modes. These were described at a national news conference in London, and after further analysis details were published by Klein in the USA.

In 1971 calibration tests were run in Loch Ness and Loch Morar by the Academy/LNI teams using a flashing strobe-light cine camera underwater, working on the time-lapse principle. In the spring, at the Academy's invitation, I had talked about the research to audiences in America and Professor Harold Edgerton, Hon. FRPS, pioneer of strobe-light photography had attended. Afterwards he invited us round to his lab at M.I.T. and promised to put some special gear together. Thus, Bob Rines was able to obtain photographs even through the peat-stained soup of Loch Ness in 1971.

In August of 1972, working from boats in Urquhart Bay, the Edgerton camera was suspended at a depth of some 50 feet. Nearby, from the LNI's workboat *Narwhal*, a compact Raytheon sonar chart recorder scanned the depths surrounding it.

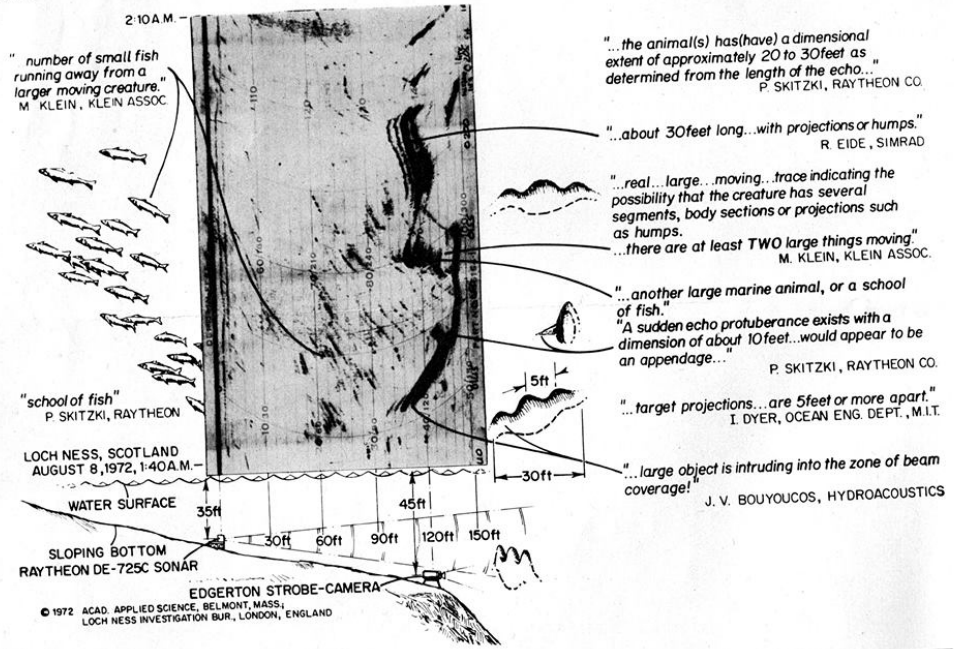
During the very early hours of 8 August 1972, a large intruding echo appeared on the Raytheon chart, and remained in the vicinity of the sonar transducer and the strobe-camera which was flashing every 15 seconds. It was moving, and fish echoes which came up as tiny dots on the chart turned into streaks as the fish swam away from it.

The 16mm film cassette was subsequently removed, flown back to the US and developed under bond by Eastman Kodak. In several frames, coincident with the sonar trace, a large but indistinct body had imposed itself.

Next, the sonar chart was submitted for analysis to no less than five separate authorities—and the film duly "computer enhanced" by the same process used to clarify some spectacular pictures from space, most recently in the case of the Mariner unmanned probes to the planet Mars.

In one frame of the film there is a remarkable improvement, showing what appears to be a huge paddle-like structure —an obvious limb; the conservative photo optical measurements of which establish a length of 6–8 feet and a width of 2–4 feet.

Below: How the picture was made and the sonar record of the event with comments by technical analysts


2·10 A.M.
" number of small fish running away from a larger moving creature."
M. KLEIN, KLEIN ASSOC.
"school of fish"
P. SKITZKI, RAYTHEON
LOCH NESS, SCOTLAND
AUGUST 8, 1972, 1·40 A.M.
WATER SURFACE
SLOPING BOTTOM
RAYTHEON DE-725C SONAR
EDGERTON STROBE-CAMERA
35ft
45ft
30ft
60ft
90ft
120ft
150ft
5ft
30ft
"...the animal(s) has(have) a dimensional extent of approximately 20 to 30feet as determined from the length of the echo..."
P. SKITZKI, RAYTHEON CO.
"...about 30feet long...with projections or humps."
R. EIDE, SIMRAD
"...real...large...moving...trace indicating the possibility that the creature has several segments, body sections or projections such as humps.
...there are at least TWO large things moving"
M. KLEIN, KLEIN ASSOC.
"...another large marine animal, or a school of fish."
"A sudden echo protuberance exists with a dimension of about 10feet...would appear to be an appendage..."
P. SKITZKI, RAYTHEON CO.
"...target projections...are 5feet or more apart."
I. DYER, OCEAN ENG. DEPT., M.I.T.
"...large object is intruding into the zone of beam coverage!"
J. V. BOUYOUCOS, HYDROACOUSTICS
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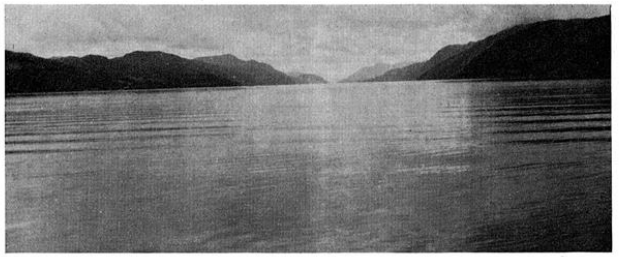
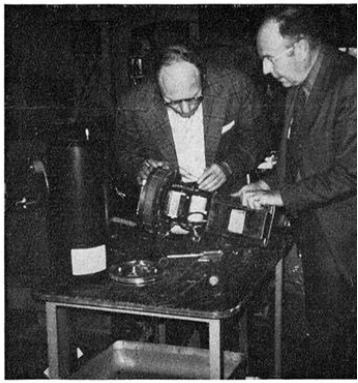
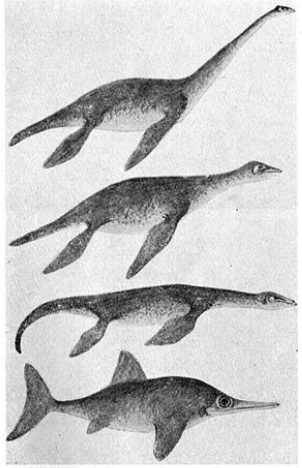
It was photographed at near to maximum range, which in the impenetrable gloom of Loch Ness water is about 20 feet.

In view of the inescapable reality of this underwater picture (and its stunning significance) comment is superfluous; unless it is to pay credit to the technical brilliance and sheer persistence of the two Americans who helped to make it possible. In this connection, and in keeping with a now established Loch Ness tradition, the picture deserves an identifying title.

I can think of no better one than the "Rines/Edgerton Picture".







Drawing of a long-necked plesiosaurus by C. Bowman taken from "The Search for Morag" by Elizabeth Montgomery-Campbell and Dr David Solomon, published by Tom Stacey

Top: The placid surface of Loch Ness in the summer of 1971

Centre: Bob Rines, 'Doc' Edgerton and Tim Dinsdale at MIT

Centre Right: Professor Harold Edgerton's lab at MIT

Above: Checking the flash rate of the Edgerton strobe camera at Loch Ness in 1971

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